Alternative Asbestos Control Method Demonstration Project
Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority - Fort Smith, Arkansas

Fort Chaffee has been identified as the site for the testing of the Alternative Asbestos Control Method, which if successful may serve as an alternative to the current NESHAP for demolition of buildings containing asbestos. The site is in a remote, secure location, to assure no public exposure, and has several identical structures with asbestos-containing building materials to facilitate a side-by-side comparison of the Alternative Asbestos Control Demolition method vs. the current NESHAP method. The buildings have a clearance of approximately 1,000 feet from the nearest occupied site on the eastern side, and far greater than that in all other directions.

The Environmental Protection Agency plans to perform a controlled demonstration to evaluate the equivalency of the Alternative Asbestos Control Method to the NESHAP method. This alternative method, if successful, would likely accelerate the demolition of many abandoned buildings around the nation that remain standing, currently presenting a variety of serious risks to nearby residents. Using the Alternative Asbestos Control Method, these former blighted areas would then be available for redevelopment, creating jobs and tax revenues for communities.

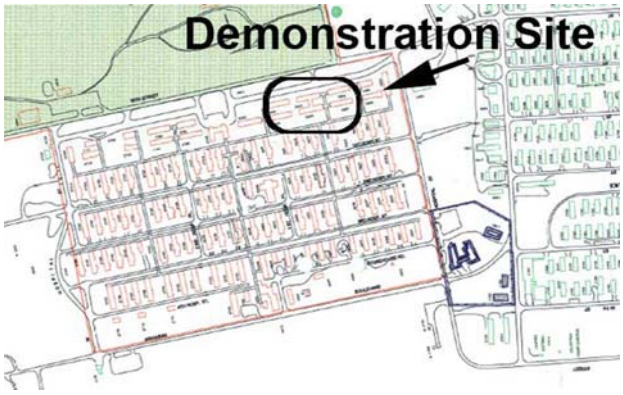
Briefly described, the Alternative Asbestos Control Method removes the most friable asbestos-containing materials before demolition, but leaves some asbestos containing materials (primarily wall systems) in place. The most friable asbestos –containing materials are removed under the requirements of the Asbestos NESHAP and are disposed of properly as asbestos-containing wastes.

Once the most friable asbestos-containing materials are safely removed, the demolition proceeds using amended water suppression before, during, and after demolition, in order to trap asbestos fibers and minimize their potential release to the air. Wastewater generated during the demolition is collected, and all contaminated materials are properly disposed as asbestos-containing waste. A two-inch layer of soil is removed to ensure that no residual soil contamination remains at the site.

The demonstration will include extensive environmental monitoring, and will allow for a representative of the City, State Health Department, or EPA to stop work if conditions so merit.

A technical team of EPA scientists and engineers is being assembled to peer review and further refine the demonstration protocol. A site-specific Quality Assurance Project Plan will be developed. EPA's Office of Research and Development in conjunction with Region 6 will oversee the study. The Office of Science Policy of the Office of Research and Development will independently conduct an external peer review of the Quality Assurance Project Plan and will obtain peer review and public comment on the final report, in accordance with the Agency's Peer Review Policy.

The project will be carried out as a joint effort of the Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, the US Department of Energy, and EPA. Public involvement is an important component for project success; therefore, communication with stakeholders is a prominent part of the project plan as well. Public involvement of local residents will be solicited at various stages throughout the project, and will be an integral part of the project plan.



Map of the project location

Typical Building at Fort Chaffee